

REMARKS

Claim Rejections:

Claims 1-32 are all of the claims pending in the present application, and currently all of the claims stand rejected.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claims 1-6, 10-17 and 21-32:

Claims 1-6, 10-17 and 21-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,493,492 to Fisher in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,501,890 to Wilson et al. In view of the following discussion, Applicant respectfully traverses the above rejection.

Much like the previously applied Hardwick reference, Fisher is not directed to an optical fiber ribbon, but is instead directed to an optical amplifier having a central fiber **66** attached to a number of pump fibers **52-63**. See Figure 4A. The fiber **66** and pump fibers **52-63** are secured to each other with a silicon based material **68**. Applicant submits that this combination, in Fisher, is not a fiber optic ribbon as this is known and understood by one of ordinary skill in the art.

Neither of the Fisher or Wilson references teach or suggest having the fiber **66** containing, or otherwise made up of, a fiber optic ribbon matrix material. In fact, to do so would defeat the purpose of the fiber **66**, as the fiber **66** would be unable (or greatly hindered) to transmit a fiber optic signal, as taught in Fisher.

As to the Wilson reference, this reference does not get the Examiner anywhere, nor would it have been obvious to combine Wilson with Fisher. Specifically, Wilson is merely

directed to an optical fiber ribbon, and has no application to optical amplifier fiber bundles or amplifiers (i.e. as Fisher). Further, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have combined Wilson with Fisher, because the pump fibers in Fisher are required to make contact with the core fiber **66**, thus the structure in Wilson would not have been desirable. *See* Fisher, col. 3, lines 9-15. Thus, the references would not have been combined as suggested by the Examiner.

In addition to the above, the features in each of the dependant claims 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 21, 22, and 25-30 are not disclosed, taught or suggested by the above combination of references. Namely, there is no teaching of a “means for separating” nor is there any disclosure that the core **66** and the pump fibers **52-63** are “co-extruded” or formed integrally with each other.

The Examiner seems to suggest that after bonding the pump fibers **52-63** to the fiber **66**, these components are then “formed integrally” or are “co-extruded”. Applicant completely disagrees and submits that this is an overbroad reading of each of the terms “integrally” and “co-extruded.” Stated differently, bonding one component with another is not forming them integrally or having them co-extruded. As is clearly shown in Fisher, the pump fibers are the fiber **66** remaining separately discernable elements. They are not formed integrally.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the combination of the Fisher and Wilson references (taken either individually or in combination) fail to teach or suggest each and every feature of the present invention. As such, the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to the above rejected claims, as required under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Accordingly, Applicant hereby requests the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the above 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of the above rejected claims.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection - Claims 7-9 and 18-20:

Claims 7-9 and 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fisher in view of Wilson, and in further view of Hardwick (previously applied). Applicant respectfully traverses the above rejection, for the following reasons.

First, Hardwick does not cure the deficient teachings of both the Fisher and Wilson references, and thus the above claims are allowable, at least by reason of their dependency.

Second, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to color code the pump fibers in Fisher, as suggested in Hardwick. Applicant disagrees. Applicant submits that pump fibers are not typical fibers, but are used to aid in the amplification of a signal. As such, they are not typically separated or removed from the central fiber. Because of this there would be no need to color code, or otherwise mark, these pump fibers. Stated differently, because they are not typically removed from the central fiber, there is no motivation to color code the pump fibers.

Conclusion:

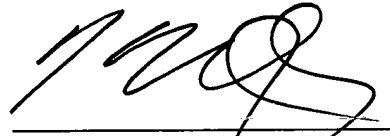
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 09/897,386

Our Ref.: A7977
Art Unit: 2839

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: February 17, 2004